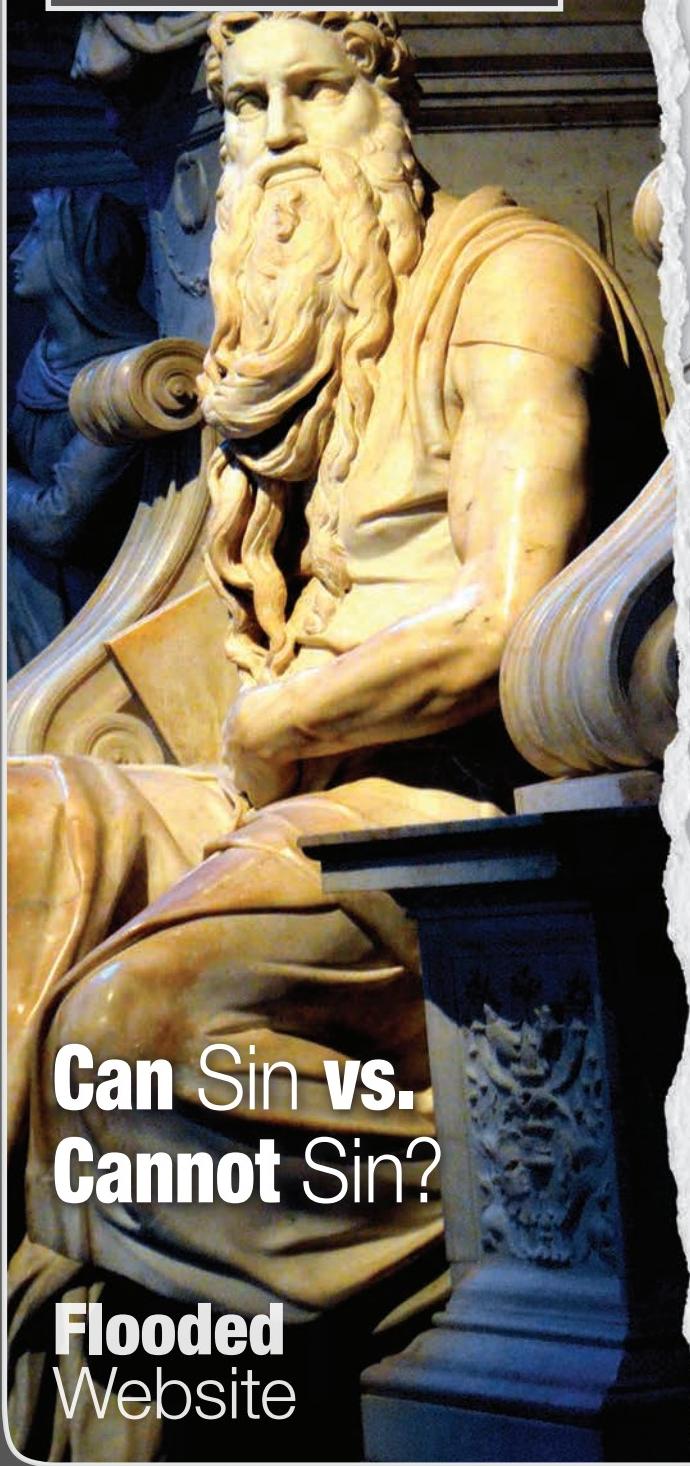




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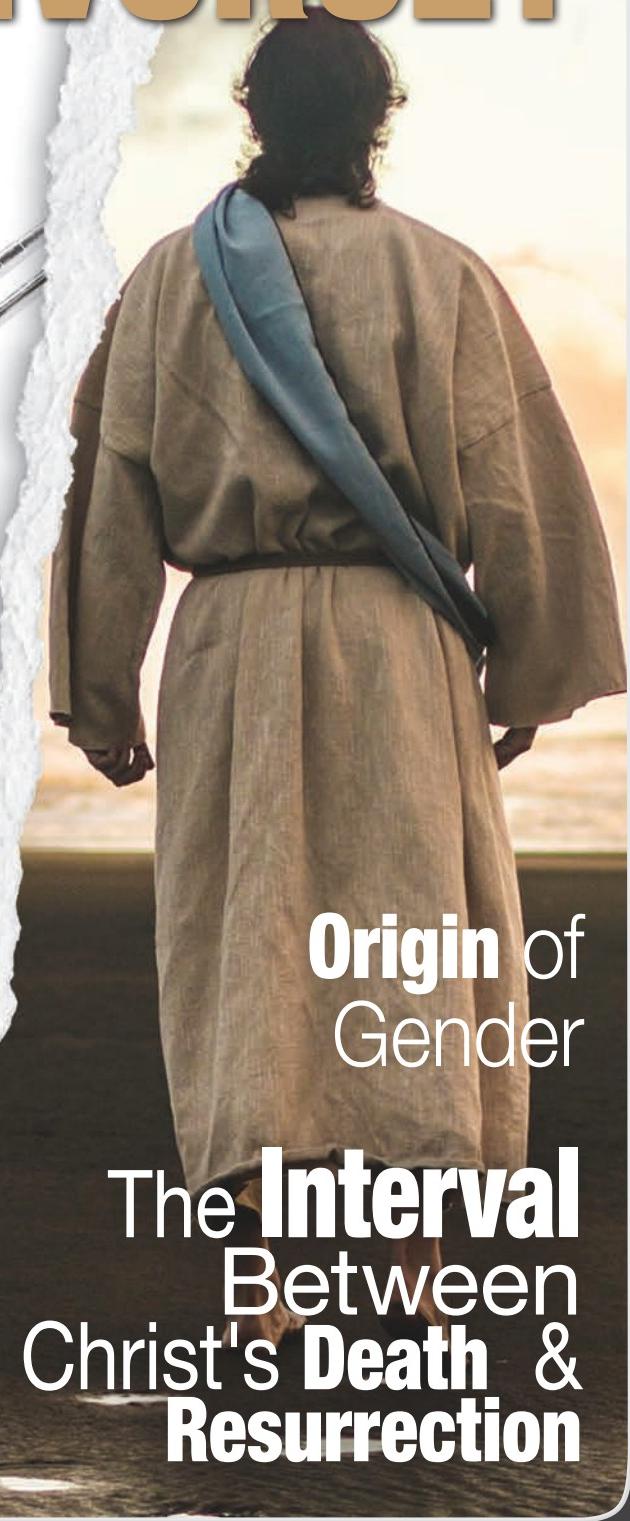
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**Can Sin vs.
Cannot Sin?**

**Flooded
Website**

DID JESUS DISAGREE WITH MOSES ON DIVORCE?



**Origin of
Gender**

**The Interval
Between
Christ's Death &
Resurrection**

Did Jesus Disagree With Moses on Divorce?



Dave Miller, Ph.D.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following 4 articles are taken from the newly released book *Hidden Meanings Buried in the Bible*.]

OVER the centuries, critics of the Bible have devoted their energies to attempting to pinpoint contradictions and discrepancies in an effort to discredit its claim to inspiration. On one occasion in the life of Jesus on Earth, the Pharisees confronted Him and demanded to know if the Law permitted a man to divorce his wife "for just any reason?" Jesus immediately directed their attention to two Old Testament verses that provided the proper answer: Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24—which provided a negative answer as evidenced by Jesus' own divine commentary on the two verses: "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6). Observe carefully: humans have no right to separate what God Himself has joined together, unless He gives His approval to do so. Hence, wholesale, carte blanche divorce is not sanctioned by God. This view of divorce coincides with God's true attitude toward divorce in His forthright declaration through the prophet Malachi: "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce" (2:16).

Before Jesus could complete His response as to whether there are any exceptions to the general rule forbidding divorce, His questioners, no doubt stung by the stringency of Jesus' answer, sought to justify their rejection of such a narrow viewpoint by calling attention to the Mosaic injunction in Deuteronomy 24: "Why then did Moses **command** to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" Their words constitute an allusion to Deuteronomy 24. Read carefully the passage as it occurs in the Pentateuch:

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD,

and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

If this Old Testament passage provides a suitable answer to the Pharisees' question, Jesus undoubtedly would have alluded to it. Instead, His response to their quibble clearly demonstrates that this passage does **not** provide the proper answer to their question concerning the propriety of divorce. He discounted the passage by offering a rebuttal to its applicability to the question at hand.

MOSES DID NOT COMMAND DIVORCE

FIRST, the Mosaic legislation, which included an acknowledgment that divorce was occurring in Israelite society, was a reflection of the **hard hearts** that existed at the time. No doubt, Egypt's influence on the first two generations of Israelites included a relaxed view of divorce, establishing a practice that was underway even before God gave His covenant at Sinai. This acknowledgment in no way provided divine sanction for or approval of divorce. The Law neither commanded divorce nor established divorce as a right. After all, who would argue that God would overlook, sanction, or save those who possess **hard hearts**? Will anyone be in heaven that possesses a hard heart? To ask is to answer. Hence, Jesus' pronouncement that the Mosaic provision pertained to "hard hearts" underscores the fact that it was not intended as a divine sanction of divorce—let alone a **command** (*eneteilato*) to do so. Such a command would, in fact, have been in direct conflict with God's original intention as reflected in Jesus' response on the occasion.

MEANING OF “PERMITTED”?

BUT if Moses did not “command” divorce, why did Jesus assert that Moses “allowed” it? What did He mean by His use of the term “allowed” (ESV/RSV), “suffered” (KJV/ASV), or “permitted” (NKJV/NASB)? The underlying word provided by Matthew is *epetrepse*. This Greek word means “to allow someone to do something, *allow, permit*,”¹ “to give over, to leave to the entire trust or management of any one; hence, to permit, allow, suffer.”² The English words “allow” and “permit” do not necessarily imply permission or approval. For example, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines “allow” as “1a: permit; 1b: **to fail to restrain or prevent.**” For the latter definition, this example of usage is given: “allow the dog to roam.”³ You may not want your dog to roam the neighborhood, yet do nothing to prevent it. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines “allow” as “to give permission for someone to do something, or **to not prevent something from happening.**”⁴ And the *American Heritage Dictionary* gives as the first meaning of “allow”: “**To let do or happen; permit.**”⁵ The word does not include the idea of sanction, authorization, or approval—let alone forgiveness. God **allowed** divorce in the sense that He **tolerated** it—like He does the wicked behavior of the world’s population throughout history. He “puts up with it.” He allows it to go on—with no implying endorsement. As Greek expositor Alexander Bruce clarified—“permitted, not enjoined.”⁶

This understanding is confirmed by two additional Greek terms that are similarly used. In Paul’s address to the idolatrous Athenian philosophers, he courageously declared: “Truly, these times of ignorance God **overlooked**, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). The Greek verb rendered “overlooked”

(*huperorao*) is defined as “to overlook, disregard; to bear with,”⁷ “to indulgently take no notice of, *overlook, disregard.*”⁸ Paul was certainly not telling the Athenians that in the past God endorsed idolatry or did not reckon it as sin. Indeed, all those who entered eternity prior to Christianity in an idolatrous state will be eternally lost. Rather, Paul intended to impress his pagan audience with the fact that God had put up with a great deal of inexcusable polytheism through the centuries. But with the coming of Christianity, all who continued to worship false gods were under divine mandate to forsake their idolatry and turn to Christ.

The KJV translated the Greek word in this verse as “winked at”: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at.” What did “winked at” mean in 1611? Interestingly enough, William Shakespeare provides the answer. In his famous play *Romeo & Juliet*, the prince of Verona, Escalus, delivers a stinging rebuke to the grieving families who have gathered in the wake of the tragic deaths of their two children—deaths spawned by their two warring factions:

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!

See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,

That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.

And I for winking at your dis-
cords too

Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punish’d.⁹

Escalus had, in fact, on more than one occasion, intervened with stern rebukes to urge the warring factions to cease and desist their hostilities—but to no avail. Hence, he “winked” at their discords in the sense that he

allowed, tolerated, and permitted them to continue **without forcibly preventing them**. He certainly did not endorse, approve, or forgive their discordant activities throughout the period in which they occurred. But he did not **stop or physically restrain them**. He had hoped that his repeated verbal admonitions would have been heeded.

A second Greek term that reinforces the proper meaning of Jesus’ use of the word “allowed/permited” is the synonym which occurs three times in Paul’s dark portrait of the Gentile world in his letter to the Romans:

- “God also **gave them up** to uncleanness” (1:24).
- “God **gave them up** to vile passions” (1:26)
- “God **gave them over** to a debased mind” (1:28).

The Greek term rendered “gave them up/over” (*paradidomi*) means “to give over, hand over, deliver up, turn over” and includes the idea to “abandon” as in “he abandoned them to impurity.”¹⁰ In addition to the three occurrences in Romans 1, the same word occurs in Stephen’s great speech before the High Priest and Jewish council, in which he described the generation that exited Egypt and constructed a golden calf to worship: “Then God turned and **gave them up** to worship the host of heaven” (Acts 7:42). A variety of English translation renderings make clear the meaning:

- NRSV: “But God turned away from them and **handed them over** to worship the host of heaven”
- NCV/ICB/EXB: “But God turned against them and **did not try to stop them** from worshiping the sun, moon, and stars.”

- NIRV: “But God turned away from them. He **let them go on** worshiping the sun, moon and stars.”
- NOG: ““So God turned away from them and **let them** worship the sun, moon, and stars.”
- ERV: “But God turned against them and **let them continue** worshiping the army of false gods in the sky.”
- DARBY/NASB1995: “But God turned and **delivered them up** to serve the host of heaven.”

Once again, it is plain to see that Jesus, Paul, and Stephen all referred to the same point, i.e., that God can tolerate and allow people to “go their own way” without His allowance implying endorsement, approval, or forgiveness.

“FROM THE BEGINNING”

SECOND, observe that Jesus next redirected His questioners’ attention back to the two verses given in His initial response to their question—verses that pertain to the very “beginning” of the human race when God articulated His intention regarding marriage. His remark (“from the beginning it was not so”—vs. 8) presses the fact that God’s will for marriage is ultimately seen at the Creation when God articulated the guiding principle that answers the Pharisees’ question. Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 are intended to be normative injunctions enjoined upon all people for all time. Greek scholar Marvin Vincent presses this very point when he observes that the use of the perfect tense in Matthew 19:8 indicates a past action that continues to be active: “Notwithstanding Moses’ permission, the case *has not been* so from the beginning until now. The original ordinance has never been

abrogated nor superseded, but continues in force.”¹¹ In other words, the sole exception—the only ground for legitimate divorce—from the Garden of Eden to our present day, has **always** been fornication.¹² This firm reality explains why even God divorced His spiritual spouse—Israel—on the sole grounds of adultery (Jeremiah 8-3:6).

THE MEANING OF MOSES’ DIRECTIVE

THIRD, careful analysis of the text of Deuteronomy 24 yields additional insights that clarify the Lord’s outright rejection of the passage as prototypical. Observe that the verses in question are lodged in a context of a particular type of legal material found in the Law of Moses known as casuistic law. This format for conveying legal obligations is couched in what logicians refer to as a “hypothetical syllogistic” arrangement—“If... then....”—in which the “if” portion of the statement is known as the “antecedent” while the “then” segment is the “consequent.” Grammarians identify the two segments as the “protasis” and the “apodosis.”

A protasis may have multiple conditions, joined together in English by the conjunction “and.” In Hebrew grammar, the conjunction is a single letter (the *waw*) which is prefixed to the subsequent word. Context must determine what conditions are part of the protasis, and at what point in the series the apodosis commences. In the case of Deuteronomy, however, it is evident that the protasis continues through verse 3 and the protasis (“then...”) commences with verse 4. Here are the conditions of the protasis:

1. When a man takes a wife **and** marries her

2. **and** it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her

3. **and** he writes her a certificate of divorce, **and** puts it in her hand, **and** sends her out of his house

4. **and** she has departed from his house

5. **and** goes **and** becomes another man’s wife

6. **and** if the latter husband detests her

7. **and** he writes her a certificate of divorce, **and** puts it in her hand, **and** sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife...

Each occurrence of “and” as bolded above is a *waw* in the Hebrew text. The apodosis now commences:¹³

Then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Observe carefully that the seven conditions of verses 1-3 are hypothetical, that is, they envision what some person or persons might do. They are not commands. They are not instructions on how to achieve a divorce. They assume that the perpetrator of the actions has made up his mind to divorce his wife regardless of God’s will on the matter—the “hard heart” of which Jesus spoke. Such is typically the case with the conditions of a protasis. For example, consider a similar construction in Exodus 21:29—

If the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned

and its owner also shall be put to death.

The four conditions of the protasis are **not actions that are approved by God**. They merely reflect circumstances that could potentially occur among people in a farm society. The apodosis is designed to provide God's attempt to manage the unpleasant situation by providing after-the-fact assistance—not indicate God's sanction of the events that led up to the dilemma at hand. Far from providing authority for divorce, Deuteronomy 24 was intended to be a **limitation** on divorce—an attempt to minimize and lessen its frequency. In the process, it served as a measure designed to address the mistreatment of women: "It prevented the husband from later claiming rights over this ex-wife."¹⁴

Having disposed of the Pharisees' quibble concerning Deuteronomy 24, Jesus brought His response to its logical climax by applying God's original marriage law to the specific matter of divorce: "And (*kai*—"but") I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (vs. 9). In sharp contrast to the apparent widespread practice of divorce among the Jews of Jesus' day, Jesus insisted that the original will of God, going all the way back to the beginning of the human race, was for a man and woman to remain married to each other for life. He forthrightly declared that the only way for that first marriage to terminate in a divorce that God approves is for one of the spouses (the innocent party) to divorce the other (the fornicator), solely on the ground of sexual infidelity. Jesus clarified for all people for all time Deity's will

concerning divorce: the one and only ground for divorce is illicit sexual intercourse. Hence, Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' original question ("Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just **any** reason?") was "no."

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Fredrick Danker (2000), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago), third edition, p. 385, italics in orig.
- ² Wesley J. Perschbacher, ed. (1990), *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), p. 167.
- ³ *The Merriam Webster Dictionary* online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allow>.
- ⁴ *Cambridge Dictionary* online, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/allow>.
- ⁵ *American Heritage Dictionary*, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=allow>.
- ⁶ Alexander Bruce (no date), *The Synoptic Gospels in The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1:246.
- ⁷ Perschbacher, p. 418.
- ⁸ Danker, p. 1034, italics in orig.
- ⁹ Act V, Scene iii, line 290ff. Other

occurrences in Shakespeare of the use of "winked" are found in *Cymbeline*, V.iv.192; *Hamlet*, II.ii.137; *Henry 5*, V.ii.300; and *King John*, IV.ii.211. See <https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/Searchresults.aspx?search=win king&WholeWordSearch=True>.

¹⁰ Danker, p. 762; Perschbacher, p. 306.

¹¹ Marvin Vincent (1946), *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1:108, italics in orig.

¹² No doubt Moses did not explicitly articulate this fact in his recounting of the events in the Garden since Adam and Eve were the only people on Earth and, hence, incapable of committing adultery.

¹³ A number of English translations demonstrate awareness of these grammatical principles and the commencement of the apodosis at verse 4. Among those that insert "then" at the beginning of verse 4 are the ESV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, RSV, NAB, and the Geneva Bible. The CEB has "in this case," the CJB has "In such a case," and the EHV has "in these circumstances." The EXB, GNT, ICB, and NCV have "In either case."

¹⁴ Jack Lewis (1978), "From the Beginning It Was Not So..." in *Your Marriage Can Be Great*, ed. Thomas Warren (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press), p. 415.

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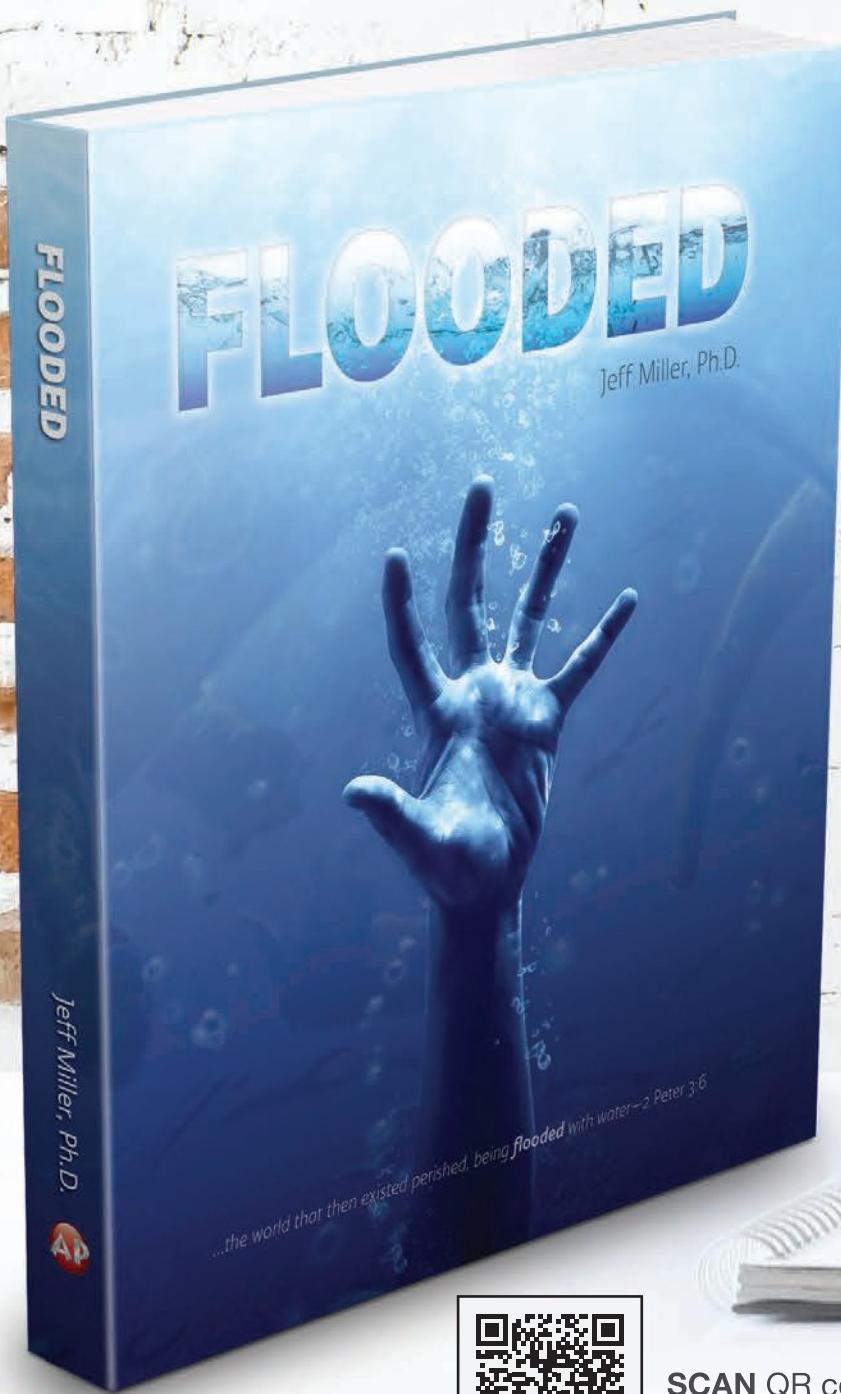
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The Interval Between CHRIST'S DEATH & RESURRECTION

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

QUESTIONS have been raised by skeptics concerning the Bible's reliability based on the reports of the Gospel writers regarding the interval of time that transpired between the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. As is **always** the case with such alleged discrepancies, further study and honest exegesis dispels the allegation. The Bible refers to this interval in four forms:

1. "on the third day" (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; Acts 10:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4)
2. "in three days" (Matthew 26:61; John 2:19)
3. "after three days" (Matthew 27:63; Mark 8:31)
4. "three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40)

On the surface, these four representations certainly appear to be inconsistent, if not contradictory. Indeed, to the English mind, these four phrases convey four different meanings. However, upon further investigation, we discover they are **interchangeable** expressions in the New Testament. The evidence from antiquity and from the Bible is decisive: "three days and three nights" in Oriental expression was an idiomatic allusion to **any portions** of the period. This fact stands **proven** and is undeniable based on at least three sources: (1) scholarly historical analysis of ancient idiomatic language; (2) biblical usage throughout the Old Testament; and (3) harmonization within the passion texts themselves.

HISTORICAL USAGE

FIRST, a vast array of scholarly sources verifies the use of this idiom in antiquity. It constituted a loose form of speech to refer to two days and a portion of a third. A.T. Robertson referred to this usage as "the well-known custom of the Jews to count a part of a day as a whole day of twenty-four hours."¹ Likewise, in his monumental volume *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, E.W. Bullinger explains that "the expression 'three days and three nights' is an **idiom** which covers any parts of three days and three nights."² The highly respected 17th-century Hebraist John Lightfoot published a commentary on the New Testament, incorporating his vast grasp of Hebrew and Aramaic usage, including the Jewish Talmud and Mishna. In that commentary, he recounts the common usage of the phrase "three days and three nights" among the Gemarists, Babylonian Talmud, and Jerusalem Talmud, concluding: "So that according to this idiom, that diminutive part of the third day, upon which Christ arose, may be computed for the whole day, and the night following it."³ The list of scholarly confirmation could be lengthened indefinitely.

BIBLICAL USAGE

SECOND, the Bible uses the same idiom throughout the Old Testament and continues into the New. For example, in the

account of Joseph's dealings with his brothers, Moses wrote: "So he put them all together in prison **three days**. Then Joseph said to them **the third day**, 'Do this and live, for I fear God...'" (Genesis 42:17-18). Joseph put his brothers in prison for "three days" (vs. 17) and then released them "the third day" (vs. 18). The two expressions were viewed as equivalent.

In his pursuit of the Amalekites, David and his men came upon an Egyptian in the field, whom they nourished with food and drink:

So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for **three days and three nights**. Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because **three days ago** I fell sick" (1 Samuel 30:12-13).

The inspired writer states unequivocally that the Egyptian had taken no nourishment for "three days and nights," which the Egyptian, in his explanation of his predicament, defined as "three days."

On the occasion when Jeroboam returned from exile in Egypt and led the Israelites in a rebellious confrontation of the rightful king Rehoboam, we are informed:

Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." So he said to them, "Depart **for three days**, then come back to me." And the people departed (1 Kings 12:3-5).

Rehoboam then consulted with the elders of the nation, promptly rejecting their advice, and then consulted with the young men of his own generation who had grown up

with him. Then the text reads: “So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam **the third day**, as the king had directed, saying, ‘Come back to me **the third day**’” (1 Kings 12:12). Lest we fail to grasp the fact that “for three days” and “the third day” are equivalent expressions, the inspired writer says so explicitly by equating them and then adding “as the king had directed.” The parallel account in 2 Chronicles completes the idiomatic usage by reading: “So he said to them, ‘Come back to me **after** (**תַּיֵּן**) three days’” (10:5). This latter allusion is not to—as a westerner would think—the **fourth** day, but to a point in time “on” the **third** day (vs. 12—**וְיִזְבֶּה**). Hence, “**after** three days” equals “the third day.”

Yet another instance is found in the book of Esther. Having been elevated to a prominent position in the eyes of King Xerxes, Mordecai urged his cousin Esther to use her influence to save the Jews throughout the Persian Empire from annihilation by Haman. Here was her response:

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink **for three days, night or day**. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him. Now it happened **on the third day** that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house (Esther 4:16-5:1).

Esther did not change her mind regarding when she would approach the king. Rather, she did exactly what she told Mordecai she would do. Hence, “three days, night or day” is precisely the same timeframe as “on the third day.”

We see the same idiom in the New Testament. One example is the inspired account of the events leading up to the conversion of the first Gentiles in Acts 10. Several temporal indicators illustrate the principle:

- “ninth hour of the day” (vs. 3)
 - “The next day” (“about the sixth hour”) (vs. 9)
 - “On the next day” (vs. 23)
 - “the following day” (vs. 24)
 - “Four days ago” (“the ninth hour”) (vs. 30)

If we count the amount of time that transpired between the appearance of the angel to Cornelius (vs. 3) and the arrival of Peter at the house of Cornelius (vs. 24), we find it to be exactly three days, i.e., three 24 hour periods. Yet in Jewish reckoning, the period included three nights and parts of four days. Thus Peter described the interval as “**four** days” (vs. 30). See the chart below.

We are forced to conclude that the phrase "three days and three nights" is not to be taken literally. It was used figuratively in antiquity. Why take one expression out of the four that are used, interpret it literally (i.e., 72 hours), and then give it precedence over all the other passages? Jesus being in the grave one complete day and night (24 hours) and parts of two nights (36 hours total) satisfies both the literal and idiomatic expressions. The English reader must not impose his own

method of calculation upon an ancient, alternate method of reckoning time.

Another instance of the same idiom in the New Testament is seen in Paul's stay in Ephesus. The text reads:

And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly **for three months**, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued **for two years**, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:8-10).

Paul states plainly that he remained in Ephesus for two years and three months. Sometime later, in his rush to get to Jerusalem in time for Pentecost, he came to the seacoast town of Miletus from whence he sent word to the elders of the church in Ephesus to come meet with him. Among the stirring remarks that he delivered to them on that occasion were these words: "Therefore watch, and remember that **for three years** I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). Once again, it is apparent that the Semitic mind considered that any

Account of Gentile Conversion

9 a.m.

Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4

24 hrs.

24 hrs.

24 hrs.

3 days

But parts of 4 days

9 a.m.

portion of a day or year could be counted as a whole day or year.

JEWISH USAGE

THIRD, it is abundantly clear from the accounts of Christ's death and resurrection that this idiom was well recognized and utilized by the Jews at the time. Specifically, the chief priests and Pharisees confirmed use of the idiom when they sought an audience with the Roman Procurator Pilate:

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, '**After three days** I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure **until the third day**, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:62-64).

The Jewish leaders did not insist on the tomb of Jesus being secured for three 24-hour days. To the western mind, the phrase "after three days" indicates the need to maintain a guard until the **fourth** day had come. But not to the oriental mind. The phrases "after three days" and "until the third day" were, to them, equivalent expressions.

The evidence from both antiquity and the Bible is decisive: "Three days and three nights" was an **idiom**. This truth stands as a **proven** fact of history. Bullinger was correct when he emphatically stated: "It may seem absurd to Gentiles and to Westerns to use words in such a manner, but **that does not alter the fact.**"⁴

ENDNOTES

¹ A.T. Robertson (1922), *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: Harper and Row), p. 290.

² Bullinger, p. 845, emp. added.

³ John Lightfoot (1823), *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae or Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark* (London: J.F. Döve), 11:202.

⁴ p. 846, emp. added.

Can Sin Versus Cannot Sin?



Dave Miller, Ph.D.

THOSE who disbelieve the inspiration of the Bible commonly call attention to passages that appear, on the surface, to contradict each other. Oftentimes, the apparent disparity is easily clarified by a closer look at the original language which the Holy Spirit selected to express Himself. One confusing concept where knowing the underlying grammar sheds further light is seen in 1 John. In 1 John 1:8-10, we find these words:

If we say that we **have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... If we say that we **have not sinned**, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

These words are hardly surprising, since most people understand that they are not perfect and, in fact, have sinned many times. Yet reading further in 1 John, one encounters the following startling remarks:

Whoever abides in Him **does not sin**. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.... Whoever has been born of God **does not sin**, for His seed remains in him; and he **cannot sin**, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:6,9).

The skeptic might easily conclude that the Bible contradicts itself—or at least John did.

However, in Greek, tense generally refers to "kind of action" which consists of linear or punctiliar. "Linear" refers to continuous action, while "punctiliar" refers to point action, a single event. The verb rendered "have (not) sinned" (a perfect active indicative) in chapter 1 refers to point action in the past with abiding results. John was saying that Christians sin, but they commit isolated, less frequent acts of sin since they are no longer under the rule of sin, and they constantly repent and confess their sins (vs. 9).

Chapter 3, on the other hand, uses a present indicative of continuous action. It refers to habitual, ongoing sin without compunction, with sin ruling one's life as in his pre-Christian state. John did not contradict himself. He simply called attention to the fact that Christians are certainly not perfect. We make mistakes like everyone does. However, having changed our minds (the meaning of "repent") about our pre-Christian lifestyle, we have deliberately chosen to forsake the sinful behavior that characterized our lives as non-Christians. Those who have not become Christians, however, have no motivation to resist sin, striving every day to eliminate it from one's mind and life.

Origin of Gender

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

CONSIDERABLE discussion has occurred in secular society in the last 50 years concerning gender—from the Feminist Movement of the 1960s to the more recent attention to transgenderism. The Bible speaks very precisely and definitively on the matter of gender. The phenomenon of gender is the result of God's own divine determination when He created the first human beings on the sixth day of Creation week: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

When God created gender, He clearly intended to set the stage for all of human history. He sought to convey for all time the interrelationship between men and women. In the New Testament, this interrelationship is discussed in considerable detail in 1 Timothy 2 where Paul explains gender roles as they relate to worship. However, Paul also discussed gender in one of his letters to the church at Corinth. His pronouncements on gender are clearly tied to how men and women in the church are to interact with each other. The respective roles of male and female in the church are affected and informed by gender.

Paul's remarks demonstrate that gender, as it relates to role function in the church, is a matter of Creation—not culture (as some have alleged). He explains the origin of gender as it was instigated by God at Creation:

For man is not **from** woman, but woman **from** man.... Nevertheless, neither is man independent of the woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as the woman was **from** the man, even so the man also

is **through** the woman; but all things are from God (1 Corinthians 11:8,11-12).

The bolded words represent prepositions in the original language. The term rendered "from" is the Greek preposition *ek* which means "out of." The man was not "out of" the woman, but rather, the woman was "out of" the man. He is referring very specifically—and literally—to the origin of the first woman on Earth. Her body was constructed from a portion of the man's body. Her physical origin was literally dependent on having been taken "out of" the man's body. No wonder Adam declared: "This is now bone of **my** bones and flesh of **my** flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken **out of** Man" (Genesis 2:23). In Hebrew, the word for man is "*ish*." Adam employed a play on words by building on the word for man to indicate a woman: "*ish-ab*."

Three verses later, Paul further clarifies gender by stating that though the woman was "from/out of" man, nevertheless, the man is also "through" the woman. Here the Greek preposition is *dia* meaning "by/through." Once again, Paul is speaking very literally. All men throughout human history (except for Adam) have come into this world **through** a woman. Women are the designated child bearers. Men have no reason to consider themselves—or their role—to be superior to women. God intends for the male to fulfill very precise responsibilities in and out of the church, and He likewise has created the female to do the same. Their respective roles are, indeed, rooted in the creation of gender by God at the very beginning of time.¹

ENDNOTES

¹ For a discussion of gender roles in the church, see Dave Miller (2014), "Male and Female Roles: Gender in the Bible," Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=7&article=5007&topicid=389>; Dave Miller (2019), *Female Leadership in the Church* (Montgomery, AL: King Solomon Publications).

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

July 9-11	Paintsville, KY	(606) 789-6219
July 14	Montgomery, AL	(334) 272-2561
July 21	Birmingham, AL	(205) 988-5808
July 28	Nashville, TN	(615) 832-9658

Eric Lyons

July 7	Huntsville, AL	(256) 852-3801
July 14	Birmingham, AL	(205) 988-5808
July 28	Scottsboro, AL	(256) 574-2489

Dave Miller

July 4	Montgomery, AL	(334) 264-2985
July 28	Birmingham, AL	(205) 988-5808

Jeff Miller

July 7	Birmingham, AL	(205) 988-5808
July 22-24	Glendale, AZ	(334) 272-8558
July 29-31	Dayton, TN	(334) 272-8558



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



Flooded Web Site

Modern science, as taught in most schools and in most major science magazines, has been highjacked by naturalistic evolutionists. Yet God owns science, not evolutionists. He instituted science and wants us to engage in it, since through science we can learn about Him (Romans 1:20), as well as subdue and have dominion over the Earth (Genesis 1:28), which can help us serve Him better.

Apologetics Press recently released a powerful new book titled *Flooded* which demonstrates the profound impact that the Flood inevitably exerts on a proper understanding of science. This volume and its associated website are designed to provide parents and teachers with the necessary tools to answer the skeptic's objections to the biblical account of the Flood. It is our goal to help young people develop an interest in science as God intended: a study of God and the things He has done (Psalm 111:2). At the same time, we wish to prepare them to respond to naturalistic evolutionists who would undermine their faith with false teaching and paint Christianity as a blind (evidence-less) faith based on ancient myths and fairytales, rather than real history.

If you have not already done so, allow me to urge you to acquire a copy of the *Flooded* book and also to visit the website in order to access the many resources available for your use. These include charts, vocabulary lists, answers to chapter questions, videos, and other useful tools.

Dave Miller



See Center Spread
for More Details